



# Greenville Water Authority Customer Service Notice

Greenville Water Authority (GWA) is committed to providing drinking water that maximizes public health and minimizes potential health risks. Using free chlorine in our distribution system is part of that commitment.

Beginning on or about October 8th, 2018, GWA will be seasonally changing the disinfectant it uses in the distribution system from monochloramine to free chlorine. This change is part of the routine maintenance program of the distribution system. In addition, GWA employees will be flushing water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow for a short period of time. The flushing cleans out sediment and allows for routine maintenance of the hydrants. Flushing is scheduled for the week of October 22nd.

This temporary change to the treatment process will be made to improve the quality of water served to our customers. GWA intends to switch back to monochloramine in May. If you have questions, contact Carol Paul, Authority Manager at 724 588-4340.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Why would GWA temporarily change from monochloramine to free chlorine?** This scheduled change in disinfectant is a standard treatment practice to keep water mains clean and free of potentially harmful bacteria throughout the year.

The scheduled use of free chlorine will ensure a high level of disinfection is maintained throughout the network of mains and pipes that deliver your drinking water. This change in the water treatment process denies bacteria the ability to form resistance to the usual disinfection treatment process.

Switching to free chlorine is a proactive step to ensure that we maintain optimal levels of disinfection in the water distribution system.

**Will I notice a difference in my water?** Possibly. Some customers may notice a slight change in the taste or smell of their tap water. Free chlorine may have a bit of a chemical odor or smell slightly like a swimming pool. Each individual customer has his or her own sensitivity to the taste or odor of free chlorine. Many people detect no change at all. If you are especially sensitive to the taste and odor of chlorine, you may try keeping an open container of drinking water in your refrigerator. This will enable the chlorine to dissipate thus reducing the chlorine taste. Remember – drinking water has a shelf life! Change out the water in your refrigerated container weekly.

In the process of flushing, some customers may notice a temporary discoloration, as well as sediment. Use caution when doing laundry. Any problems can usually be resolved by running the cold tap water for 2 to 3 minutes.

**What is free chlorine?** Free chlorine is a slightly stronger disinfectant than monochloramine and is commonly used by drinking water utilities. For utilities that commonly use monochloramine, free chlorine is used periodically to ensure resistant bacteria and viruses do not grow in the distribution system.

**What is monochloramine?** Monochloramine is a disinfectant used in drinking water to kill bacteria and viruses. It is made up of chlorine and ammonia. Monochloramine has been used for disinfection by the Greenville Water Authority since 2004.

**Why does GWA use monochloramine most of the year?** While free chlorine is an effective disinfectant, using chlorine alone creates byproducts, which are regulated by the US EPA. We can reduce the levels of these byproducts through the use of monochloramine.

Monochloramine is a better long-term choice because it produces lower levels of disinfection byproducts like trihalomethanes, improves the taste and odor of water (compared to free chlorine), and lasts longer in the distribution system to prevent bacterial growth.

**Are free chlorine and monochloramines safe?** Yes. Both forms of chlorine are effective and safe for people and animals to drink, for cooking and bathing, watering the garden and for all other common uses. However, precautions should be taken to remove or neutralize both free chlorine and monochloramine for dialysis patients and in the preparation of water for fish tanks and ponds. A de-chlorination process optimized for monochloramine will work equally well with free chlorine.

**What about dialysis patients?** Both chlorine and monochloramine must be removed from water used in kidney dialysis machines. A pre-treatment scheme used for dialysis should include some means, such as a charcoal filter, for removing chlorine. If you are a dialysis patient or have questions, call your physician or the dialysis center nearest you.

**What about fresh and saltwater pet owners?** Chlorine, like monochloramine, must be removed from water used for keeping live fish, amphibians and other aquatic life. To protect Koi fish, lobster, shrimp, frogs, turtles, snails, clams and live coral and other aquatic pets, use a treatment product that removes chlorine. These products are readily available at most pet supply stores and aquarium dealers. Dogs, cats, birds and other animals can safely drink water treated with either chlorine or monochloramine.

**Where can I get more information?** For specific information about what is in GWA's water, see our Annual Water Quality report which can be found on our website at [www.gmwa.info](http://www.gmwa.info).

For information about disinfectant and disinfection byproducts visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/national-primary-drinking-water-regulations>

<http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/PublicDrinkingWater/Pages/Chloramine-in-Drinking-Water.aspx>